

Recent Developments in the Field of Inland Shipping in Northwestern Europe

By Mr. Henk Schroten, Hoofdingenieur-directeur Rijkswaterstaat, Directie Zuid-Holland

Thank you very much. You surely have put pressure on me because I've got minus ten minutes I think. Anyhow it's a pleasure to be here as a guest of the Army Corps of Engineers because like Rolf said, I've worked for 35 years already with the Rijkswaterstaat which you might consider to be Civil Corps of Engineers.

In history there are quite a few examples of cooperation between the Army Corps of Engineers and the United States of America and our civil corps of Rijkswaterstaat in effect. At the moment, a new memorandum I understand is in preparation, and we hope to sign that in a few months' time. So, we have a lot of things in common. If not only problems of the management of water systems, with all kinds of problems we have there.

But today we are talking about recent developments in the field of inland waterway transport in Northwestern Europe. And I should like to tell a few things on strategies in traffic and transport, a little bit about container transport. And finally we'll end with some new developments in the field of relevant information services.

If you want to make strategy, you must have some idea of the future. And that's why in our most recent national policy plan for transport and traffic, we made three scenarios. You see the DE. That means Divided Europe. The second one is Europe Coordinated. And the third one is Global Competition. You see competition leads to the best results.

Anyhow if you take the middle scenario, even then you have an increase in transport of 50 percent, and as you know, road infrastructure and rail infrastructure is limited. You have to increase it, and that's not very popular because of costs and effects on the environment. You have to look at possibilities of inland waterways. Even government knows that now.

But not only in Holland, but also you have to consider Rotterdam as it is not a Dutch harbor, but a European harbor with all the hinterland connections. You see here a map of Europe at the northwestern point is Holland with its Port of Rotterdam. At the right side of the map is the Black Sea. And there's a river system connected from the North Sea to the Black Sea, only you can't navigate it. So, you have to improve that to make more inland waterway transport possible.

So, it's very good to mention that there was an initiative of the Ministry of Transport of Romania that's bordering the Black Sea and the Minister of Transport of the Netherlands responsible, of course, for the waterways in Holland and the connection from Rotterdam inland to have a conference in September last year.

There were, in fact, more attendant European countries that had a part of this inland waterway in between the borders. There were observers from the United States and Asian countries. And there was decided to do something about that connection.

And then you have to look into the different regulations of different countries. And there you see a whole scala of regulations. So, you have to standardize that, and that's a lot of work, but that's going to be started.

Also, there's a recommendation for our own European global positioning system that's going to be developed. And in effect in Barcelona this year on a recent ministry conference, it was decided to develop that kind of positioning system. So, it's very important to make uniform regulations. That's the first solution.

And, of course, you have some standardized infrastructure as well. The measures of our locks for example.

Now, we go to our own Dutch policy. As I said, we expect tremendous growth in traffic. And our aim is not the average of 50 percent on inland transport, but 75 percent. So, you can have less growth on roads and railroads. Despite the fact that we're also building railroads, we expect a lot of capacity of the waterways. And we say well, we have to facilitate mobility.

And there's a change in policy, in fact. Because still ten years ago the policy of the government was to lower the mobility, especially on roads, but now we facilitate. But we say we have to think of very clever methods of using the existing infrastructure; electronics, better data exchange, and so on.

You have to pay for the use of infrastructure but only for the roads; still not for the inland waterways. And then if those new technologies don't work out enough you might add new capacity. Traffic has to be safe and fluent, of course. The data exchange is helpful for that. Data exchange leads to further development of the river information services. I'll talk about that later.

But first I'd like to show you a map of the Netherlands. In fact, you've got two main streams on inland waterways. There's inland waterways in the figures there. There are the TEUs per year.

You see the west east line from Rotterdam to Germany. Of course, it's very important. But even the inland waterway to the north of the country is very effective if you look at it. And that means, of course, there are lot of container transport more than 100,000 TEUs per year, and that's a development.

Mr. Roos also mentioned ten years ago when we decided to build a railroad from the Rotterdam port, we didn't expect that inland transfer to go on waterways, especially not on short distance. But we were quite surprised to find out that through competition,

between different modes of transport you find a lot of container transfer on short distance. And even with barges of only 32 TEUs, which is very good for short transfer.

They're even thinking about some regular services, some floating stock firms like Heineken from the beer and Proctor and Gamble from the pampers. They are going to start a pilot on that next year, and we expect quite a lot of that. And that's really an innovation, I think.

So, you might have ideas about the future, but you might be surprised to find out that it's different than you expect. Well, I skipped the containers. River Information Services. The development of the Regional Transfer Center, you can see quite a lot. This has to do with intermodal transport, of course.

And again it's remarkable to mention that the same Heineken transferred all the export beer through inland waterways to the harbor instead of by truck before, and that makes a big difference for us that's responsible for the roads like I am, also.

Then we go to River Information Services. What's that? Well, we have to develop it, so I can't tell you exactly. But you find out that when you look at the whole transport chain, there are lots of people involved from producers to customer, of course, but even police for the safety, fire brigade for calamities, info providers, but also shippers and skippers and shipowners. And they all have their own data in the system, but they don't fit. They're a misfit, or they're off, and that's a waste of money and effort. But it's also a possibility for mistakes and loss of money, of course.

So, you can have information service in the field of forest planning, transport management, traffic management, calamity, abatement, lock and bridge planning, port and terminal planning, and supervision like your police and fire brigade as I mentioned.

If you manage to get into Phase II of this field, and you make agreements of compatibility of this, you might win a lot. That's our intention. And it's decided in the European Commission that we shall pay attention to that. And we have already started some projects like information data, river information system, and that's working quite well.

On the next sheet you can see what you can get when you don't make the links between the different data systems. Because waterways get crowded, you must know where ships are and when they are there, and what they've got for cargo.

So, there are lots of initiatives to improve those data systems. And we expect a lot of this in the future. There are quite a few international organizations busy in the field, European Commission Fifth framework program has got funds available that's where the money comes from Dr. Hochstein. If you put forward good proposals to the European Commission, you get money for good research programs.

The Rhine Commission is also active in the field. And recently it made a standard for a digital river map, which is very good. And they also installed a working group for standardization on the Rhine.

PIANC also is very active in this field. And you might note that recently it was a report of Working Group 24 on those river information services. And I can inform you that there's also a group active on preparing a brochure. That's a very compact report on this aspect, and that will be published before the Sydney Congress.

And I've seen the program of Sydney. Lots of papers are on this information services, and lots of descriptions I'm sure will be in this compatibility of information in Sydney. And I think we will reach very good conclusions there.

And the last thing I mention, in many European countries that are responsible for inland waterways, there's now a platform that's going to coordinate this national initiatives. Because the main problem, of course, you can work on it, but you have to do it in the same direction in the same system in the same language.

Just to conclude, this was about new technologies and innovation. I expect that innovation in the field of data exchange will get high profits. Also, you have to innovate in standardization of regulations and in cooperation with Europe. Because when you want to use European waterways, you must have the same regulations and the same standards for infrastructure. Thank you very much.

